

Amendments to the Claims

1-44. (canceled)

45. (new) A method for routing calls in a communications system, comprising:

receiving a call object in a persistent store identifying an incoming phone call for a recipient, wherein the persistent store allows insertion of objects without loss of attributes and has a notification service;

translating the call object into a smart secretary object that the persistent store can operate upon;

identifying the recipient from the smart secretary object;

determining if an object exists within a community that includes the persistent store that provides preferences for the recipient;

if an object does not exist that provides preferences for the recipient:

translating the smart secretary object to a call object for a phone associated with the recipient; and

ringing the phone associated with the recipient; and

if an object does exist that provides preferences for the recipient, routing the call according to the preferences of the recipient.

46. (new) The method of claim 45, the method further comprising examining call data associated with a call to avoid routing loops.

47. (new) The method of claim 45, wherein routing the call according to preferences of the recipient further comprises:

routing the call to a different recipient;

determining if an object exists that provides preferences for the different recipient; and

routing the call according to preferences for the different recipient.

48. (new) The method of claim 47, the method further comprising returning to the preferences of the recipient after completing the routing of the call according to the preferences of the different recipient, if there is no answer at any numbers identified by the preferences of the different recipient.

49. (new) The method of claim 45, wherein routing the call according to the preferences of the recipient further comprises routing the call sequentially to numbers identified by the preferences of the recipient.

50. (new) The method of claim 45, wherein routing the call according to the preferences of the recipient further comprises broadcasting the call to number identified by the preferences of the recipient.

51. (new) A computer-readable medium containing a program to use a message-processing agent to process and route calls in a communication system, the program, when executed, causing the computer to:

receive a call object in a persistent store identifying an incoming phone call for a recipient, wherein the persistent store allows insertion of objects without loss of attributes and has a notification service;

translate the call object into a smart secretary object that the persistent store can operate upon;

identify the recipient from the smart secretary object;

determine if an object exists within a community that includes the persistent store that provides preferences for the recipient;

if an object does not exist that provides preferences for the recipient:

translate the smart secretary object to a call object for a phone associated with the recipient; and

ring the phone associated with the recipient; and

if an object does exist that provides preferences for the recipient, route the call according to the preferences of the recipient.

52. (new) The computer-readable medium of claim 51, wherein the program, when executed, causes the computer to exam call data associated with a call to avoid routing loops.

53. (new) The computer-readable medium of claim 51, wherein the program causing the computer to route the call causes the computer to:

route the call to a different recipient;

determine if an object exists that provides preferences for the different recipient; and

route the call according to preferences for the different recipient.

54. (new) The computer-readable medium of claim 51, wherein the program, when executed, causes the computer to return to the preferences of the recipient after completing the routing of the call according to the preferences of the different recipient, if there is no answer at any numbers identified by the preferences of the different recipient.

55. (new) The computer-readable medium of claim 51, wherein the program causing the computer to route the call causes the computer to route the call according to the preferences of the recipient further comprises routing the call sequentially to numbers identified by the preferences of the recipient.

56. (new) The computer-readable medium of claim 51, wherein the program causing the computer to route the call according to the preferences of the recipient causes the computer to broadcast the call to number identified by the preferences of the recipient.

57. (new) A device for routing calls in a communications system, comprising:

means for receiving a call object in a persistent store identifying an incoming phone call for a recipient, wherein the persistent store allows insertion of objects without loss of attributes and has a notification service;

means for translating the call object into a smart secretary object that the persistent store can operate upon;

means for identifying the recipient from the smart secretary object;

means for determining if an object exists within a community that includes the persistent store that provides preferences for the recipient;

means for translating the smart secretary object to a call object for a phone associated with the recipient and ringing the phone associated with the recipient if an object does not exist that provides preferences for the recipient; and

means for routing the call according to the preferences of the recipient, if an object does exist that provides preferences for the recipient,.

58. (new) The device of claim 57, the device further comprising a means for examining call data associated with a call to avoid routing loops.